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In Egypt, for the week ended December 15, there was only 1 case of plague.

Respectfully,

A. R. THOMAS,
Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.
The SURGEON-GENERAL,
U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.

TURKEY.

Regulations as to the admission of ships at Constantinople from plague-infected ports.

HULL, ENGLAND, December 12, 1901.

SIR: I beg to transmit you, hereunto annexed, a report on the action of the authorities at Constantinople, establishing regulations relating to the admission of ships to that port from ports infected with plague without having certificates to show that they were thoroughly cleared of rats before loading, and incidentally to dead rats and their connection with recent outbreaks of plague in Hull, Glasgow, and Liverpool. The circular of the British board of trade in relation to the above subject is also annexed and made a part of the report.

TURKEY AND RATS.

The Turkish authorities at Constantinople have taken the rat question seriously in hand by the adoption of regulations governing the admission of ships into that port from the Mediterranean, and ports where infection or plague is said to exist. The health board has considered the question in all its phases, and accepted the popular theory that rats are responsible for the spread of plague where the climate and unsanitary conditions are found to assist in its development.

As there is not another city on the European continent that needs protection against itself in this respect more than Constantinople, the promulgation of the new rules is regarded here with a seriousness that is not without a tinge of humor. In Hull the shipowners have already taken the matter in hand, and a correspondence has been opened with the Turkish embassy in London on the subject. The consular representative here knows nothing about it; nor do the people at the embassy, as is shown in replies to the consulate. The Wilson Steamship Company has been unable to obtain any authentic information on the subject from either source, and have to rest content with what has been published by the British board of trade. They are preparing, however, to meet the difficulty, and have secured the services of a professional rat killer in Hull to make war on the pests in all ships sailing for Constantinople. Heretofore it has been their custom to employ powerful disinfectants for this purpose, sulphur dioxide (SO_2) being largely used. Thousands of rats have been destroyed in this way, and in nearly every instance were found dead on the lower deck, immediately under the hatchway. They come out on the deck from the bilge to get the air and die there. It was found, however, that all did not perish this way, as numbers have been found dead under the deck.

The rat catcher's methods are said to be more effective. He operates at night when the ship is clear of its cargo, using traps principally, and various sorts of baits in which anise seed, pork, etc., figure prominently. In every case the carcasses are consumed in the furnaces. Some of these carcasses are sent to the medical officer of health, Dr. Mason, to undergo a bacteriological examination.

DEAD RATS AND PLAGUE.

It will be in order in this connection to invite the attention of the Department to an important fact having a special bearing on the recent so-called epidemics of plague in Hull, Glasgow, and Liverpool; it is this, that all this infection had its origin in, or was associated with, dead rats. This was specially noticeable in the mortality which occurred on the steamship *Friary* which came into Hull from Alexandria over a year ago, with 6 of its crew down with plague. There were 11 cases all told, 5 having died during the voyage. The remaining 6 died in the quarantine hospital 3 miles from Hull. All these men lived in the forecastle of the ship, where dead rats were found, and the presumption might be well set up that their deaths were the direct result of the effluvium from the putrefied remains. The unsanitary condition of this part of the ship assisted materially in causing this mortality. As I have already stated in my report on this subject, the cat and dog that lived in the same atmosphere with these men sickened and died. The men who were housed in the after part of the ship were not affected. The doctors who were called in were at first unable to diagnose these cases, and after some hesitation and considerable discussion agreed upon a diagnosis of pneumonic plague. The result of the post-mortem examinations showed that the chest cavities and lungs were the parts affected, and hence the word pneumonic. This seems to bear out to a certain extent the effluvium theory.

The *Friary* went direct to her dock without undergoing quarantine, and remained there a week or ten days, until she was ordered out by the medical authorities. During that period, hundreds of people had access to her, but not 1 case of infection occurred beyond those who were stricken in the forecastle. The outbreak, in a hotel at Glasgow, originated in the basement where dead rats were found, and was confined absolutely to the servants who were employed there. The case of the barmaid who was taken ill at the same time, is said to have been the result of fright more than anything else. Similar conditions were noticeable in the Liverpool outbreak, and the conclusion becomes inevitable that these short-lived epidemics are merely a malignant form of sickness which is brought about by a total disregard of the ordinary laws of sanitation. The practice in this country of poisoning rats, and permitting their carcasses to remain in the casings and under the floors in living houses, in a state of putrefaction, is not uncommon, and is very frequently responsible for sickness and disease which are liable to be misunderstood by medical practitioners. The dead rat and not the living rat seems to be the danger.

It will be seen by the following paper issued by the British board of trade, that the enforcement of the regulations at Constantinople will inflict great hardships on shipping, in addition to the cost involved in the tedious process of unloading and reloading, before finally discharging at the docks proper, as required by the provisions in Articles I and II.

THE CIRCULAR.

Regulations concerning the destruction of rats on ships bound for a Turkish port:

The board of trade has received, through the foreign office, a copy of a dispatch from His Majesty's ambassador at Constantinople, dated the 5th instant, transmitting copies of the new regulations dealing with the destruction of rats on board ships bound for Constantinople.

His Majesty's ambassador reports that the regulations as finally adopted by the Constantinople sanitary board are of a much milder character than those at first proposed, the British delegate on the board having succeeded in securing a reasonable delay in the enforcement of the new measure which is only to come into operation in the case of arrival from the Black Sea and Mediterranean in a month, and in the case of ships arriving from elsewhere in two months, after the regulations have been printed and formally accepted by the Porte.

Articles I and II of the new regulations enact that vessels coming from a port infected with plague must be provided with a certificate of "rat destruction" obtained at that port, or at some intermediate port, without which they will have to proceed to the lazaretto for quarantine.

The only advantage which a certificate of rat destruction will give to a ship from a contaminated port is that it will be allowed to operate in the port, although not alongside the quays. A ship from a contaminated port, on the other hand, which has no such certificate, will be compelled to go to lazaretto (such as Touzla or Kavak) and have its rats destroyed.

As this process of rat destruction can only be carried out when a ship is completely empty, a ship arriving from a contaminated port without a certificate of rat destruction, will, under Article I, be compelled to go to a lazaretto to completely discharge its cargo into lighters, to have its rats destroyed, and to reload before it can come to Constantinople, and discharge a second time. This would involve an enormous loss of time and money (two to four days of time, and 2 francs per ton of money at least), and it will be essential that all ships coming to Constantinople from a contaminated port must provide themselves with a certificate of rat destruction; otherwise on arrival at Constantinople they will be subjected to the above costly measures.

The regulations (in French) may be seen on application at the commercial intelligence branch of the board of trade, 50 Parliament street, S.W., any day between the hours of 10 a. m. and 5 p. m.

Respectfully,

WM. P. SMYTH,
United States Consul.

Hon. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE.

Foreign and insular statistical reports of countries and cities—Yearly and monthly.

ARGENTINA—*Buenos Ayres*.—Month of October, 1901. Estimated population, 800,000. Total number of deaths, 1,371, including diphtheria, 18; enteric fever, 7; measles, 9; scarlet fever, 30; whooping cough, 2; smallpox, 61, and 176 from tuberculosis.

CANADA—*Manitoba—Winnipeg*.—Month of December, 1901. Estimated population, 25,642. Total number of deaths not reported. One death from diphtheria and 2 deaths from measles reported.

Quebec—Sherbrooke.—Month of December, 1901. Estimated population, 11,765. Total number of deaths, 30, including diphtheria, 1, and 8 from scarlet fever.

CHILE—*Iquique*.—Four weeks ended December 14, 1901. Estimated population, 27,000. Total number of deaths, 123. No deaths from contagious diseases reported.

CUBA—*Santiago*.—Month of November, 1901. Estimated population,